

Congressman Pence [appeared](#) on the *FOX News* program ["On The Record with Greta Van Susteren"](#) to discuss the lack of transparency that has marked Democrats' health care negotiations:

[Transcript:](#)



**GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, FOX NEWS HOST:** Hold on tight and get ready! Another battle is here. The countdown is on. And the final version of the House health care bill is close. Critics say Republicans only want to block the bill. But wait a second! Are the Democrats working behind closed doors, hiding the final details of the bill from the GOP? Congressman Mike Pence joins us. He is the House Republican conference chairman.

Good evening, sir. And tell me...

**REP. MIKE PENCE, R - IN:** Good evening, Greta.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** ... are you trying to block the Democratic bill? Do you know what the details are from the House?

**PENCE:** You know, we really don't. We know what passed out of the House Commerce Committee. We know what they're talking about in the Senate. But you know, we're all -- I think

millions of Americans are anxiously awaiting what the Democrats are going to unveil tomorrow. But what's the old saying? You know, here comes the new boss, looks like the old boss. You know, we got a feeling that, you know, what we're going to see unveiled tomorrow is just another version of a massive government takeover of health care paid for with hundreds of billions of dollars of higher taxes and mandates that's going to cause millions of Americans, especially seniors, to lose the health insurance that they have today.

And so we're going to be fighting that, but we're also going to continue, as the Chicago Tribune helped with today -- going to continue to advance Republican solutions that we believe will resonate with the majority of the American people.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** Well, maybe to the surprise of the House and the Senate, we Americans have been able to see how the sausage is made, or at least the spotlight has been on it recently. And of course, we recently saw that in the Senate, the bill came out of the HELP Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, and then House (SIC) Majority Leader Harry Reid added the opt-out provision, which was not discussed earlier.

**PENCE:** Right.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** Tell me, do you expect the bill that comes out tomorrow to have a profound difference from what at least the expectation out of the committee has been?

**PENCE:** Well, you know, they're so committed to government-run insurance and there's so many liberals in Congress that are committed to an outright public option, it's hard to see how this thing changes very significantly, other than around the margins.

But you touch on a really good point, Greta, and that is, you know, I think it's troubling to millions of Americans that after committees did their work this summer in the House and Senate, this thing when behind closed doors over the last month-and-a-half, and you know, we really don't know what's going to be unveiled on the West Front of the Capitol tomorrow.

And that's not what President Obama promised. He actually said as a candidate that when it

came time to negotiate and develop health care reform legislation, that that would be done in broad daylight. In fact, he said it would be done on C-Span. Well, the exact opposite has happened here. This has all happened behind closed doors. That's why we think it's just going to one more version of a government takeover of health care.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** Well, we're not even getting to the nuts and bolts of the bill. I'll tell you, the process is quite disturbing because you know -- you know...

**PENCE:** Right.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** ... we all love democracy. We love the give-and-take. We like to see, you know, the majority party and minority party duking it out, having a debate. But in this particular instance...

**PENCE:** You bet.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** ... and I guess it happens all the time, but the spotlight is on it -- you have 177 Republican members of Congress who represent lots of citizens, and they have virtually no voice in this behind the closed -- like, we -- we sent to Congress to -- whether you're minority or majority, to fight for us, and you're excluded from the fight when it's done behind closed doors after the fact.

**PENCE:** Yes. You know what? One of the things I love to do here on -- at the Capitol is to give tours to the 8th-grade classes that come streaming in from Indiana every spring. And you know, because 8th-graders have finished their -- they're typically finished their government and civics course. And they're expecting the government the way you just described it. Most Americans expect a give and take, an open, transparent process, where ideas are vetted, we call the votes, the majority wins, but that's not what's happened here.

And to be doing this on a bill that not only will affect I think one sixth of the economy, but 100 percent of the American people for generations to come is really unconscionable.

But you know, the process is what it is. They're going to bring out what we believe is going to be a massive new version of their government- run insurance, and Republicans are going to be ready not only with our solutions, but we're going to be ready to be -- to be in the fight on behalf of Americans who want to preserve the insurance that they have, especially seniors. They want to preserve that Medicare Advantage program. I mean, 10 million seniors could stand to lose Medicare Advantage if the some \$160 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage and end up being a part of this bill.

So we'll be in the fight. We'll be bringing solutions. But you're right, this is absolutely no way to run a railroad when it comes to legislation of this import.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** And I guess you say, I mean, this is the way the system is done. It's the way it has always been done. But I guess my sort of thought is, Stop it! You know, that -- you know, you -- that the Congress and the president and the Senate, you promised -- you know, everyone promises transparency, and the statement that this is how the Republicans did it when they were in the majority or whatever -- it just -- you know, that isn't a good excuse to the rest of America. You know, people want you just to stop it! You know, we really want to know what's being debated and what's being decided.

**PENCE:** Well, to be honest with you -- you know, and I -- the last -- the first six years of this decade, I was in the Republican majority. I spent a few pretty long nights fighting members of my own party on big spending bills, and I wasn't always happy with the process at the time.

But to be honest with you, Greta, I don't ever remember legislation of this magnitude in the nine years I've been in Congress -- I don't ever remember legislation of this magnitude going subterranean and being completely rewritten, and then emerging in a flash with just a matter of days to consider it. You know, I would defer to historians, but I don't recall this happening under previous Republican or the -- or Democrat Congresses. This is new, and the fact that this will affect 100 percent of the American people in our health care choices, in the relationship between our doctor and patient, is just deeply troubling.

**VAN SUSTEREN:** Congressman, thank you, sir.

**PENCE:** You bet, Greta.